

Saturday, August 16, 2003

NIGHT LIFE

Schrock teams with Dave Rave, a Canadian legend

By Ben Monaghan

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You can find Night Life in the Portland Press Herald's Go section every Thursday.

Dave Rave is touring with Kate Schrock this month and they are hitting some familiar spots around the state. For those not familiar with Rave, he is something of a Canadian legend as a former member of the band Teenage Head (later changed to Heads at the request of the MCA label).

It is unlikely you will ever find any reference to Teenage Head in American rock 'n' roll anthologies, but in Canada they are still regarded fondly. The late '70s, early '80s bar band made the headlines about as often as they made the charts. Although the band's recorded material is thin, their live shows sustained them for years. In Toronto it reached such a pitch that in the summer of 1981 during their performance at Toronto's Ontario Place Forum a riot broke out. The band made front-page news across the country and the incident, one of the few known riots to have ever occurred in Canada, prompted Ontario Place management to ban "rock acts" permanently.

Rave was a bit of a latecomer to the band and perhaps is best remembered by Teenage Head fans for providing a steady hand on rhythm guitar, taking over lead vocals and being the force behind their later studio work. It was especially in the latter that he developed a name for himself, becoming a reliable session player for Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno, among others, and earning a reputation for being able to lay down "the best version of a song he had never heard."

How Schrock ever hooked up with Rave is a mystery. I couldn't think of two more polar opposite musicians. Yet Schrock sang and performed on Rave's latest CD, "Everyday Magic," joining Maine drummer Ginger Cote (of Darien Brahms and the Anchors), and Rave returned the favor, recording, producing and performing on Schrock's latest, "Indiana."

Rave has often been called the Nick Lowe of Canada. It is a mantle that makes some sense. When I first heard his latest CD I thought of Dave Edmunds, who collaborated with Lowe first as a fellow member of the band Rockpile and later as a soloist. I thought of Edmunds first because of the two, Edmunds did more of the hard, pop rockabilly thing than Lowe, who has become more of a country crooner.

Rave shares Edmunds' enthusiasm for a good, twangy guitar pop stomper, as "Everyday Magic" makes clear, but his position as composer, producer and collaborator definitely draws him closer to Lowe. Similarly, like Lowe, he is a hard one to pigeonhole. "Everyday Magic" is a grab bag of styles and songs, at times employing orchestrated strings, synthesizer, piano and cello. It does well to reflect the variety of artists Rave has worked with over the years, and shows off his skill as a master songwriter of both the slow ballad (check out "Once in a Life Time") and the quirky pop number.

I took the opportunity to once again give Kate Schrock's "Indiana" a listen, and my fondness for this CD continues to grow. I am always struck by just how courageous a songwriter Schrock is. Whereas most songwriters create a persona, a musical attitude, or a point of view that shields them from putting too much of themselves into their work, Schrock places no such barrier between herself and her listener.

One senses she writes for herself to come to terms with the challenges of day-to-day living. For all the pitfalls this might entail of self-indulgence and irrelevance she manages to transcend the personal and reveal a world that is much more rewarding than the posturing of lesser artists.

Indiana

Kate Schrock

FACE MAGAZINE MAY 2003 review by James S. Pike

five bottles

A well-configured album from start to finish; music crafted with experience and an apparent deep knowledge in the creation and presentation of a good song.

Indiana is nearly flawless in its delivery. The vocals and instrumentation are arranged with a finesse and class that deserve recognition. Each song independently is not only accentuated by its accompaniment but lifted to a higher plateau of musical prowess that the song alone simply could not summit without a boost. "Saving Grace" is a somewhat haunting number that could translate powerfully with a lone piano and a touch of reverb on Schrock's seductive Ricki Lee Jones-esque vocals, but with the subtle addition of a sparse organ, "Saving Grace" lingers so much longer in the room once the last note fades.

As with the aforementioned track, most of these songs are piano/organ driven ballads. Schrock gracefully borrows from a handful of her noteworthy predecessors—Chrissie Hynde, Rickie Lee Jones, the less abrasive side of Patti Smith—and sings predominately introspective songs that shy away from the up-tempo and instead embrace a more contemplative pace. She's poetic but not wordy. A class act. I toast Schrock, her producer and sound engineer, and all the musicians who contributed to this release. Praise be to you. A pleasant trip

BY SAM PFEIFLE Portland Phoenix Feb 27- March 6 2003
Kate Schrock travels to Indiana, by way of Canada

POINTS NORTH: Kate Schrock has employed a talented cast of hammerheads from north of the border on Indiana.

Local musicians don't take offense. Kate Schrock certainly meant none in traveling all the way to Hamilton, Ontario, to find a backing band to support her piano and vocals for a brand-new album, which she's titled Indiana. She didn't even think she was going there to record an entire album. It just sort of worked out that way.

We should all be so blessed with pleasant surprises.

Schrock has been around the block a few times during her decade (and five albums) in the music biz as a fiercely independent performer. Along the way, she befriended producer Dave Rave DesRoches — whom Schrock calls Canada's Joey Ramone — who is ensconced in Hamilton and surrounded by that town's talented players (they're called, affectionately, hammerheads).

Maybe you know Hamilton, actually. Producer/performer Daniel Lanois (U2, Brian Eno, Bob Dylan, Peter Gabriel) is from there. He's kind of famous. And there are literally hundreds of active bands in the Steel City. As Schrock puts it, 'Hamilton has a really amazing music scene'.

So, when DesRoches called up last year and asked Schrock if she'd like to come out and do some recording in an old Hamilton church, it seemed like a good idea.

He said, 'Why don't you come out and we'll just use these guys', says Schrock. DesRoches told her these guys had helped out on the last Joe Mannix album. I had to go to them.

'It was as relaxed a project as I've ever been involved with', she says. 'Basically, I just showed up and Dave started calling his buddies. We didn't realize we were making an entire record'.

The bulk of the work was put in by Bill Becker on the guitar, Keith Lindsay on keys and accordion, Peter Ribhany on bass, and drummer Ray Farrugia. Again, you may know them. You'll find Ribhany on a number of old Motown records. Farrugia's Junkhouse is a pretty popular band up north. Then there were folks dropping in to provide a woodwinds section, backup vocals, some acoustic guitar, and all manner of instrumental help.

The band ended up producing one hell of an album — warm, inviting, and easily conveying the relaxed atmosphere of its creation. The songs slide effortlessly into one another, Schrock's dreamy ether of a voice dancing above her own rolling piano and the nearly-always spot-on instrumentation put together by DesRoches and partner Glen Marshall.

Maybe the fact that Schrock slept in the back of the church for the four days in which they were recording has something to do with the record's palpable immediacy.

Right from the album's first track, 'Lives I Have Touched', the interplay between the languid guitar and Schrock's pressing piano grabs you right by the gut. With the drums, they create a wonderful tension, continually threatening to break out into a barnburner, but, instead, teasing further with a chorus that moves ever more minor.

'I listen to the AM radio and I stare at the walls', Schrock sings, by way of the song's reluctance to excite, with her voice becoming more urgent as it climbs into the icy high notes in mimicry of her explanation that 'I become emotionally frozen'.

I'm guessing the church was bereft of very much sensory stimulation, as it seems to have suited Schrock's soul searching. You won't find much narrative in her lyrics: The first and second person dominate, and though the music still seems mildly depressing in its construction, she seems, rather, just anxious that her current good luck will end.

In 'Need', her call of 'I don't need much more than this', sung in a manner to make this song the disc's most memorable, is echoed by responses that imply her happiness might be transitory. But the repetition is enough to make you actually believe that she's content with the uncertainty.

Her gospel influences are showing through, not only in the construction but also in the resignation.

'The Master', with its intriguing Rhodes intro, and some muted, dirty guitar, is similar: 'We thought we knew each other so well', Schrock sings. 'But we mistook the road to heaven/For the road that

leads to hell'. Like the best of gospel, she's able to adeptly pair guttural, low-end power with crisp, high-end delicacy. Listen for the memorable delivery of the phrase 'beautiful boy', followed by the subtle little guitar lick. Then compare it to the falsetto she employs on 'it's your life' and at the end with the repeated 'are you too proud?' Very cool stuff.

As is her mid-song piano break, one of the few true solos on the disc, twinkling like broken glass right along with the Rhodes break. The contrast of sounds threatens discordance and makes you split your attention.

But the sounds here are varied. 'If Loving You' is more than a little bit '80s, marking time like a quiet Duran Duran tune - and something about her delivery reminds of Simon LeBon, too. Of note here is the esoteric backup vocals, floating far below Schrock's vocal track.

There's a jam-band influence here, too. 'A Light on the River', sounds like Jerry's guitar, circa Terrapin Station, really excellent, and the drums behind the piano are a rat-a-tat-tat march that keeps the tune upbeat despite the vocals. Later, the intro to 'Follow Through' mimics a thoughtful, late-set Phish jam, or maybe a large orchestra warming up.

Of course, it's hard not to make comparisons to Tori Amos and Sarah McLachlan — and the Elton John Tiny Dancer chord bite in Boy from the North — but that's good company to be in. I'd say she's more like the latter of the two piano-playing women, especially when Schrock turns to more spare arrangements like those on 'Bird on a Wing' or 'Set Me In Motion' or 'One Horse', where her voice is paired simply with the piano, maybe the organ, or some light drums breaking through. And I know McLachlan's depth is her stock in trade, but I'd say Schrock's the more honestly soulful.

This comes most to the fore on the album's namesake, 'Indiana', which also closes things out. Like William S. Burroughs in a mid-bennie rant, Schrock cackles and murmurs in a total change of vocal pace — slightly low in the mix, matter-of-fact, clipped and quick in delivery, and more nonsensical than normal. It's like we've been invited inside her diary.

These soulful, downbeat arrangements are what Portland audiences will be treated to via live concert. Unfortunately, the band won't be making the trek to Maine for Schrock's CD-release party tonight, February 27, at the Asylum — or maybe I should say fortunately, as Schrock says some people like her better when it's just her and the piano. She's returning to the club that saw her open for Sophie B. Hawkins earlier this year, when they turned it into a nice-vibing listening room'.

Here's hoping the locals turn out similarly to embrace Indiana.

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A pleasant trip

Kate Schrock travels to *Indiana*, by way of Canada

BY SAM PFEIFLE Portland Phoenix Feb. 27th, 2003

NIGHT NOTES

Kate Schrock takes it to the next level with new 'Indiana'

By Ben Monaghan

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In 1995 Kate Schrock changed the landscape of the local scene with her release of "Refuge," her spare piano playing (less the occasional jazz flourishes), strong melodic instincts and powerful lyrics quickly catapulting her onto the local and national scene. Shortly thereafter she moved to Chicago, released two more CDs and amassed a large following of ardent fans.

A couple of years ago Schrock quietly moved back to Maine, and this week releases her most powerful work to date, "Indiana." Not since "Refuge" have I enjoyed Schrock as much. The gospel-like chord progressions that at times have felt formulaic and repetitive are better balanced, less formulaic and given more melodic focus, opening up the songs to allow Schrock's voice to soar. And when set loose, as in the beautifully crafted "Bird on a Wing," you feel as if you are passing into another dimension of Kate Schrock that up until now has only revealed itself in tantalizing glimpses.

A gifted lyricist whose songs play like small vignettes, Schrock's theme remains focused on matters of the heart. Her songs have the power of short stories, casts in small harbor towns where love provides the only reprieve. At times dreamy, at other times self-reflective with tinges of sorrow and regret, Schrock lays bare the feelings and doubts too often thrown aside. Brutally honest and frank, "Indiana" is a nice addition for those whose CD collection is heavy on the Tori Amos, Aimee Mann, Fiona Apple and Joni Mitchell.

Schrock traveled to Ontario to record and produce "Indiana," working with the producer/engineer team of Dave DesRoches and Glen Marshall, whose credits include Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno. I counted 15 musicians credited in the liner notes, as well as a couple of co-writing credits. This is still very much Schrock's CD, but the production quality and arrangements, especially within the large spaces that Schrock creates with her piano playing, are extremely well-done. If you're unable to get to the CD release party at the Asylum tonight, you can order the disc at www.kateschrock.com.

KATE SCHROCK:

Musician Shares a Common Language

By Alex Lear / Lincoln County Weekly / July 4, 2002

Damariscotta: Having traversed a path of music that has encompassed nearly her whole life, Kate Schrock feels younger and more energized than ever.

Now the singer-songwriter-piano-player is bringing that magic back to the area where she grew up.

The former South Bristol resident will be one of the several acts appearing at the Lincoln Theater on Friday, July 5th. Also highlighting on the bill are The Coming Grass, which includes brother Nate Schrock, and juggler Fred Garbo. Doors open at 7:30 pm., with the show beginning at 8 pm. The musicians' albums will be available for purchase.

Now working on her fifth album, the 37-year-old Schrock has gained immense experience and joy from her work since she started playing the piano at the age of 5.

“There was a lot of music in our house”, remembered Schrock June 29th. Her father was a folk singer and, coming from a religious background, she noted that every household activity had music associated with it.

At the South Bristol Elementary School she engaged herself in Mr. Snowe’s music program.

“It’s a common language”, Schrock noted.

Her influences have included the Who, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Queen, Joni Mitchell, and the early songs from the Elton John/Bernie Taupin songwriting team.

At the University of Chicago during the mid-80’s Schrock was lead singer for the alternative five-piece band Sin Embargo, Spanish for “nevertheless”. After spending two years playing around the city and writing music together, the band broke up in 1988, also breaking Schrock’s heart.

“I never wanted to go through that again”, she said of the rise and fall of the band. “I decided to do it myself. I can never break up with myself.”

She said she continued her work, “Because I loved it so much. I’m just so in love with writing and performing music.”

Schrock had spent years writing poetry and playing music on the piano, so songwriting became the perfect marriage of the two creative forms. Over the next seven years she compiled a backlog of songs, equivalent to three albums, which she has never returned to. “They are beginning sketches,” Schrock said.

Her music is a pop blend of rock, jazz and gospel, and her work has been compared to that of Fiona Apple, Tori Amos, Aimee Mann and Joni Mitchell.

Moving to New York City to study theater, Schrock became an off-Broadway technician. Still, she had very little money and returned to Maine in 1992. Her dreams remained alive in the recordings she made with a boom box, until she heard of a local talent contest.

Participants had to submit demos; the winner earned free studio recording time. Having won the contest, Schrock recorded two songs, one of which, “Mission Beach”, became a local hit.

Schrock began meeting a number of musicians, along with developing relationships with radio stations. Meanwhile she waited tables to earn money.

By 1994, the time finally came to make an album. Schrock already had a handful of songs from the past few years, and she wrote the rest that year to round out the nine songs making up the album, *Refuge*. “It was an arduous process,” said Schrock, noting that she had to keep saving up the money to finish the album. \$3,000 later, her first album was complete. Six months after that it has sold 1,000 copies.

“It paid for itself”, Schrock noted.

She has chosen not to sign onto major labels, which she said have become consolidated with time. “The music industry is corrupt,” she noted. “I’m bound and determined to continue on independently.”

Depending on herself has “enabled me to stay strong and independent,” said Schrock. “It keeps my feet on the ground.”

Schrock’s albums have some out on her own Kakelane Music label.

Shunyata followed in 1997, and then *Dames Rocket*, (2000) and *Live from the Majestic* (2001). Her fifth album is in the works, and Schrock plans to record it in Canada with some musical friends in September. “It’s taken on a life of it’s own”, said Schrock of the album, noting that “we’ll see what the baby looks like before we name it.”

Along with many of her songs being included on compilation CDs and film soundtracks, including MGM’s *Carrie II: The Rage* (1999). She was also called one of the best new artists of 2000 by Billboard.

She has toured with several well-known musicians, including Stephen Stills; Mick Taylor, the original Rolling Stones guitarist; Taj Mahal and former MC5 member, Wayne Kramer. Meeting one of the tour managers gave her many new connections, Schrock noted.

“It’s all about getting out there and finding the people you resonate with,” Schrock said. “There is no certain path. You’ve got to forge your own way. I’ve really been lucky that way.”

Schrock paints houses when not immersing her self in music. While painting one house, she was asked by someone who recognized her if she was also a musician. She joked that she’s an aspiring house painter, doing music on the side to make money.

When asked where she sees herself in five to ten years, Schrock had to take some time to think. “I’m at a funny point in my life,” she said. “If I showed myself five years ago where I am now, I’d say, ‘no way!’ Maybe I’m a little myopic, but I live in the moment, and I’ll see where that takes me.”

I try to keep myself in line with the right decisions,” Schrock added. “If I can just have my feet on the ground in five years, and respect and enjoy what I am doing, that’s success to me. Music is my passion. It’s in my soul. It helps me to make sense of life.”

And perhaps, next Friday night, she will help her listeners to do the same.

The Portland Phoenix

March 21 - 28, 2002

***1/2 Kate Schrock

LIVE AT THE MAJESTIC

(Kakelane)

Kate Schrock has this reputation for being one seriously deep chick —

people are always describing her music as haunting, or ultra-personal, or mesmerizing. But it doesn't really come through on the studio recordings. Her latest, *Dames Rocket* is great, but not haunting. With instrumentation by folks like Nate Schrock, Spencer Albee, Reed Chambers (Relish), and Ginger Cote, too much of the essential Kate gets lost in what wind up being really good, if really depressing, pop/folk tunes. This live album, however, this will get you. Unless you're just completely heartless. Here, Schrock is laid completely bare, with her piano the only thing accompanying her (yes) mesmerizing voice singing (you got it) ultra-personal lyrics. Take "The Edge" as an example. On *Rocket*, the tune opens with some poppy Jim Begley drums, then mixes in some guitar by Steve Drown and brother Nate. When the chorus comes, you might be led to believe this is an upbeat tune. But here on the live album the chorus just about knocks you down. "I'd go to the edge," Schrock sings desperately, her voice rising for the last syllable, "trying to understand." Whoever this guy is that can "look upon someone with both love and hate," who can "lie and cheat and still sleep at night" — well, I just wanted to grab him by the collar and give him a good shake for making anyone desperate enough to sing a song like that. Such passion from someone who claims to be nervous in pre-song banter is damn impressive. Recorded last June in Tulsa, Oklahoma while Schrock was on tour with Monte Montgomery, this disc is good, and not just because it's a fine mix of tunes off Schrock's *Shunyata* ("Overboard" and "Madman" sparkle), *Refuge* (a spare "Mission Beach" is very cool), and *Rocket* ("St. Jude" would do Billy Joel proud). It's a lasting document of what makes Schrock's music original and profound.

— Sam Pfeifle

ARKANSAS SEMOCRAT GAZETTE April 2002
Pianist-singer-songwriter follows her musical muse
By Jack Hill

Singer-songwriter-pianist Kate Schrock knows about happy accidents. Thought she has a deliberate career focus, some things can't be prepared for. Her latest CD, *Live at the Majestic*, is such an event.

"That wasn't planned", she says. "It just happened and I didn't even know my set was being recorded. I was doing some shows with guitarist Monte Montgomery, and after my set, the sound man just handed me the disc and said, 'We got this on tape'".

Montgomery and Schrock first combined their talents through another such happy accident, she recalls. The two performers were touring some of the same Midwest clubs, and Monte caught the flu, forcing him to reschedule some shows. A club owner called her and asked if she would consider letting Montgomery play on the same night that she did.

"We hit it off, and a few months later, he called and invited me to come out solo and open some shows for him and his band," she says. "So we went around and did shows in St Louis, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Fort Smith. I had a blast. With him being a guitar virtuoso and me a piano player, it was a good mix, and the two shows' approaches gave the audience a variety. It seemed to go over very well and we are thinking of doing more of that."

Schrock is returning to The Afterthought for what she reckons must be her fourth show. She visits the area not just to perform, but also to visit her mother, Jan Schrock, who moved here several years ago to take a job as director of church and community relations with Heifer International. The organization has made an impression of Schrock, who still lives in Maine, where she was raised.

“It inspires me, when I visit the Heifer Project, to think about an attitude of living with less and with what’s important”, she says. “As I travel and see the world and see where we’re at and where we are heading, the message I take in is the importance of things such as sustainable farming, especially in this age of excess we live in.

“Plus there’s this baby camel I’ve fallen in love with! I love to see her every time I am in Arkansas.”

Sometimes compared to Tori Amos, Kate Bush or Joni Mitchell, Schrock differs in going it alone, not just solo, but also in her career choices. Like singer-songwriter Ani DiFranco, Schrock puts out her own albums and books her own shows, preferring to avoid the music industry horrors that could be visited upon her, as they have upon others.

Music became a focus for Schrock slowly but surely. She worked as a model in New York and Paris, spent months building wooden lobster boats and four years studying philosophy and theatre before focusing on the music she was hearing in her mind and soul.

She released her debut album, *Refuge*, in 1994, and followed that with *Shunyata*, in 1997 and *Dames Rocket*, in 2000. Other than the live album that came out a few months ago, she plans to stick with a three-year schedule of studio releases.

“I’ve started working on a new one, but when you have to raise the money yourself, or make it, you’re dependent on that which can take a while”, she says.

Going it her own way, through writing her own songs, singing them and playing them on piano can appear like a slow road to fame, but she is content with playing the tortoise to the major label hares that are out there.

“I’m okay with that, and I’m going about this for different reasons than some”, she says. “The reasons make sense for me, and thank God that they make sense for some people who notice what I do. They may not be in the majority, those who listen to top 40, and believe what they hear and read and listen to advertising and don’t got the extra mile to search under the rocks for those of us who might be there.

“I’m steady and true to what I do and it’s between my souls and my mind and my art. I was encouraged at a recent show I did at a Borders bookstore in Tampa, FLA, where two little girls, about 8 and 10, were watching me and the younger one blurted out, ‘I think you sing better than Brittany Spears!’ we all laughed ~ but I think maybe there’s hope for those of us not part of the mainstream, There were people who came up to me after that show who thought maybe I had inspired these girls to consider things other than what they saw on their tvs.”

By Amy Steele

Based in Maine, singer/songwriter Kate Schrock writes songs that resonate with emotion. Her haunting, ethereal voice anchors her well-crafted and complex music. Schrock works with layers, unusual compositions and strong lyrics. Her latest effort, *Dames Rocket*, showcases her beautiful, mesmerizing voice and often heart-wrenching compositions.

“Lose Myself” haunts with its dark vocal style and memorable chorus: “I’ve traveled so far to lose myself.” The simple, wistful way that Schrock sings this song draws the listener to her immediately. With “Mission Beach”, she achingly sings, “I miss you too much to speak of / each day gets a little bit worse.” That statement has so many meanings and speaks volumes. Self-production allows Schrock to control everything. She delves into self-exploration and acceptance with the stunning, honest “Anything in the World.” The mixes of piano, bass, percussion, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and organ on various tracks add to the intimacy and sultry attitude that Schrock exudes from every angle on this album.

“A good song is lyrically driven with an unusual chord structure that is going somewhere unpredictable,” Schrock explained from her country setting. “It’s going the path least tread and having the ability to leave a lot to the listener’s imagination. You open up the world with many layers, depth and multiple meanings. The words come together and feed each other. I explore aspects of human emotion. Strife and confusion and paradox inspire.”

She taught herself piano and never expected to be a musician. While at the University of Chicago for a few years, she sang in a Roxy Music/ velvet Underground-esque band and truly enjoyed the experience. She started working on her own writing and has taken a D.I.Y. approach by creating her own music label.

“The industry is volatile right now with corruption in the structure of major labels and their power. It’s basically run by people whose motives I question. I’d rather do it on my own scale my way than to place myself into mechanics out of my control. I can do things as I feel; solve my own problems on my own accord, say what I want to day and do what I want to do.”

This Bennington graduate has lived across the country-New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and around the world; she spent time in Paris. Being in a serene environment like Maine allowed her to break a longstanding writer’s block by retreating from hectic city life.

“I have a lot of time to think without the constant borage of the big city stuff. Although I did live near Times Square NY at one point and did a heck of a lot of writing inspired by interesting characters and drama.

While things are never easy as a female artist, Schrock believes things have greatly changed since her career began years ago. Suzanne Vega paved the way for artists such as Tori Amos who paved the way for artists such as myself.

After putting out albums on her own for 7 years, it’s clear that Schrock is not in this for the money but for the love of expressing herself through music. She often finds herself on tour around the country. When we talked she was planning to head South very soon. She has a website (www.kateschrock.com) and believes in the independent spirit of the music business.

“Music creates spiritual and mental health.”

DOWNBEAT October 2000

Kate Schrock: *Dames Rocket* (Kakelane 0400; 49:18) *** Kate Schrock populates her introspective songs with searching, often battle-scarred characters. They search for love, redemption or self-knowledge, and Schrock tells their stories with a strong, fervent voice, perhaps reminiscent of Sarah McLachlan. Schrock's plaintive piano melodies set the tone, and most tracks are arranged simply to emphasize her voice and keyboards. *Dames Rocket* is her latest and best-sounding CD of three releases on her Kakelane Label. Electric guitar and horns add texture and extra punch to several tracks including "Lose Myself" and "St. Jude". Schrock sounds so good with horns that I wanted to hear a whole CD with the larger group. By Jon Andrews

SINGER GOES HER OWN WAY

Arkansas Democrat Gazette Friday, September 8th, 2000

Taking her musical cues from Joni Mitchell and Ani DiFranco, Kate Schrock is writing her own material and presenting it her own way. The native of Maine, who also paints as well as writes and sings her material, a la Mitchell, releases it on her own label, Kakelane Music. She conducts her business from her South Bristol, Maine, base. After noting how well DiFranco has managed from her Buffalo, N.Y., headquarters.

Schrock has released three albums: *Refuge* in 1994, *Shunyata*, in 1997 and *Dames Rocket* earlier this year. (The unusually titles second album is a Hindu word meaning "enlightenment")

She has built wooden lobster boats studied philosophy and painted houses.

Inspired and influenced by Kate Bush, Bob Dylan, Rickie Lee Jones, The Rolling Stones, the Who and the Beatles, Schrock has opened shows for Stephen Stills, Taj Mahal, the BoDeans, Sonia Dada, Cracker, Maceo Parker and former Rolling Stone Mick Taylor.

The singer-songwriter-keyboardist is traveling with a three-piece band.

Kate Schrock Showcases Unique Style

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD Music Mag Thursday, September 14, 2000

By Geoff Harkness mag@ljworld.com

Though she lives on 130 acres in Maine, surrounded by quiet, Kate Schrock is one busy musician.

"I do everything myself", Schrock explained. "It's my own label, I do my own booking, my own marketing. I've been doing this the last 3 years – booking tours and going out on the road. I had to be resourceful and find things on my own. So, it's due to my own tenacity. I don't want to get caught up in the industry web. I just want to be putting stuff out, and writing and doing my own thing."

Schrock recently released her third CD, "Dames Rocket," and is driving across the country, three-piece band in tow, to showcase her unique approach to music.

In a phone interview from Little Rock, Arkansas, the singer/songwriter/pianist discussed philosophy, "women's" music and the evolution of her sound.

"I started playing piano when I was about five. I only had about four lessons in my life," Schrock explained. "I didn't like the lesson part of it, so I just learned my own thing and taught myself. I always loved the sound of the piano – I always heard it in rock 'n' roll. The Who, The Rolling Stones – all that stuff. So, I just had an ear for that. Then, I got into writing poetry in my teens, but it wasn't until I was in my 20's that I started putting it together. I started getting into the process of songwriting and realizing how interesting that was. So, it evolved organically."

Schrock spent two years studying philosophy at the University of Chicago – and experience that shaped her mind and her music.

"My mind works in a philosophical way," she said. "It has since I was a kid, which is why I was interested in studying philosophy. That's what turns me on. So, that's my bent in writing – it probably comes out that way because that's in my nature. I don't consciously think about it, but that's my orientation. I have a very curious mind."

While in School, Schrock found herself by arguments over the "best" philosophers, finding a universal quality in a range of works.

"When I went to school, it was all the old German men – Hegel, Kant and all those guys," Schrock said. "It left me addled in a way. I read a lot of Nietzsche before I went to college – really heavy existentialist type of stuff. Later, I evolved towards an Eastern bend and have studied a lot of zen, which resonates with me. I think everyone is basically trying to say the same things."

Books and bands

Schrock wasn't just hitting the books in Chicago, she was also pounding the keys in a local band.

"I was in a band in Chicago that was together for two years", Schrock said. "When the band broke up, I began writing my own style, which is still the style that I have now. It hasn't changed dramatically, but it's evolving slowly. I guess, it's an amalgam of the stuff I was listening to back then – Roxy Music, Velvet Underground and Miles Davis. I love space and I love simplicity and I love poetry. I wanted to create something that had some simplicity and some depth to it."

Schrock is supportive of the recent movement in so-called "women's" music, but doesn't consider herself a member of the Lilith Fair crowd.

"I'd like to believe that my music is gender non-specific," Schrock said. "I don't like to lump things into gender. I think the whole quote-unquote 'girl-movement' has been important, but I think at a certain point you have to get away from gender politics and start looking at art for art's sake. Good art and bad art have nothing to do with gender. So, I really appreciate the movement, I support it, but I don't really identify with it. I feel like I am sort of outside of that."

When she is not on the road, Schrock lives in a small fishing village on the coast of Maine. Though the setting is an idyllic one for writing music and rehearsing, Schrock enjoys the rattle and hum of life on the road.

"I think I'd go crazy if I stayed at home and never left," Schrock said. "I'd go out of my mind, you know? On the other hand, I'd probably lose my mind if I were touring all the time as well. The balance for me is

really good – to be out on the road and then to come back home. There is no one I live on 130 acres and it's very, very quiet. That's great but after awhile I get antsy and want to go back on the road."

MUSICIAN DEFIES FEMALE CLICHÉ

Kentucky Kernel April 25th, 2000 by Heather Patton

There is a cliché going around the music industry, and it often begins with the phrase, "female singer / songwriter." It is a sad cliché because it skews the line between the Joni Mitchells and the Mariah Careys of the world. It is for this reason I would describe Kate Schrock as an artist with one hell of a voice.

Schrock's elusive, penetrating voice bellows like a proverbial torrent of life's experiences. Laying down some of the most thought-provoking lyrics to come out of the recent evolution in the rock era, Schrock taps the wells of spirituality, love and the people who often walk pithily in between the two.

According to Schrock the ideas for her songs can come from anywhere.

"I'm inspired by feelings I get from other people, life events and a lot of contemplation," she said.

Schrock, a native of Maine, said that she began writing songs because she was able to say in a song what she couldn't otherwise.

"Music was always my second nature and helped me relate to the rest of the world and not be so shy," she said.

Today, Schrock seems far from being a shy girl and more like a master of the "Do It Yourself Age." She is the owner of the Kakelane Music label where she has produced three of her own CDs: *Refuge*, *Shunyata* and her latest release *Dames Rocket* due out this month.

The title of Schrock's second CD is a Hindu word meaning something like; 'the confusing and awe-inspiring state where boundaries become blurred'. In a sense, it's a lean towards enlightenment. Enlightenment is a completely appropriate description, especially if you pay close attention to Schrock's innovative piano playing, which is probably only comparable to the likes of Tori Amos. Schrock's lyrics, however, show glimpses of influences like Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell.

In her song, "Heaven" Schrock tells the story of a trio of individuals who are forced to deal with their own plight in life. Schrock doesn't just lead the listeners through the song, she paints a vivid picture of a girl from a war torn country, a night shift factory worker who paints pictures of Jesus and another girl with scars the size of Kansas.

It may be inevitable that Schrock is labeled a female singer / songwriter, but her talent speaks far better of her than the running cliché in pop music.

"Women musicians should not all be lumped together because they share the same gender. I think the surge in the popularity of women in music was inevitable. There have always been women in music – great women," said Schrock.

COMPARE ALL YOU LIKE; SCHROCK'S STYLE IS HER OWN

Portland Press Herald Night Notes, Thursday November 16th 2000

By Lisa Wolf

Kate Schrock has been compared to Tori Amos for her moody piano melodies. A cross between Melissa Etheridge and Sarah McLachlan comes to mind at the sound of her vocals. Her lyrics are honest and contemplative in a Joni Mitchell kind of way.

But no matter how you slice it, the sum of Kate Schrock is greater than these comparative parts. Through her music, Schrock embodies the ethereal spirit of woman.

Honesty, contemplation and a little bit of wallowing sorrow are at the core of Schrock's 2000 release, "Dames Rocket", on her own Kakelane label.

Steve Drown at The Studio recorded and mixed the 11 solid tracks, on which Schrock is accompanied by a handful of local artists including drummers Jim Begley, Reed Chambers and Ginger Cote, Spencer Albee on Hammond RT3, brother Nate Schrock on bass and guitar, and Drown on guitar.

The essence of "Dames Rocket" shines through in the song "The Wait", with the stanza: "I'm gonna find my heart / With a painter's brush and a writer's pen / Find the pieces that got blown apart / I trace the steps of the places I've been."

While the words are poetic by nature, the sparse keys and spaced instrumental accompaniment hang heavily on Schrock's delicate voice for a beautifully bare, dramatic effect.

But she is not all soft, as becomes evident in attitude-equipped songs like "Pig": "Go back to your mother / She always said you're her special son / Then go to the wall that you built around your soul / See if you can find anything at all." Ouch.

ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH 2000

Pop Music – Diane Torian

SCHROCK's hard to top

If the Lillith Fair still existed, perhaps songwriter Kate Schrock would be dazzling thousands in packed amphitheatres. Instead, she will play her gentle melodies before a lucky few at a Soulard corner bar. Maine native Schrock plays a little like Tori Amos, sings a little like Aimee Mann and writes a little like Joni Mitchell. Now top that, Sarah McLachlan.

Kentucky Kernel weds. Sept 6th, 2000

IT'S A SCHROCK LOBSTER!!!!

I totally apologize for the title. But rest assured Kate Schrock will need to make no apologies when she opens for the rescheduled Monte Montgomery tonight. Her blend of rock, jazz, gospel and pop fuses under her voice, which soars and swoops with a quiet, yet powerful authority, defining her talent well above all the other piano-wielding female singers pithily invading the nation. Instead, Schrock's genuine spirit

infuses her sounds with an august presence and philosophy, while a gentle anger rumbles throughout like a storm that's still far-off.

Billboard April 15th, 2000

Kate Schrock

One of the best un-signed artists in the US

INDIE-MUSIC.COM February, 2000 by Les Reynolds

Kate Schrock's music leaves you craving more.....but she never really leaves you at all.

Her latest release is a selection of nine original songs so beautiful they nearly defy description. Her haunting, precise alto drips with controlled passion and rich clarity. Her keyboard / piano-based rock has a hypnotic energy culled from gospel, jazz and blues influences. And this CD goes full tile with instrumental production – a bit of a departure from the more pared down, sparse (but good) sound of a previous release, "Refuge." And it's done very well.

Kate's own piano playing seems quite intuitive – minimalistic yet always very present and gut level. She knows when to punch and when to "give it air" and let the other instruments in. The rhythmic, gently rolling power is compelling and magnetic.

Highlights are many, but the standouts include...

"Lose Myself," which doesn't quite fit the aforementioned description. But, it's good nonetheless. It's a funky pop number reminiscent of some Tori Amos' stuff laid out on a bed of whirring keyboard work.

"Mission Beach," (which also appeared on "Refuge") is one of those flowing, soaring acoustic guitar/piano tunes that has Kate's voice lying right along with it; Kate's brother playing the acoustic, 12-string and bass. He plays bass on most tunes, actually; and a smooth and spooky electric slide on "The Edge". And speaking of flying, the sky's the limit on "Great Love", with Kate's great vocals overdubbed on top of her own for heart-stopping harmony.

But perhaps the one song that does it all for this CD is another of the singer-songwriter's tunes from "Refuge" titled, "Anything in This World" – which, like most on this list, is a passionate, slow tempo and rich, melodic work of art. While Reed Chambers on drums bassist Nate provide the core rhythm section, it actually feels like Kate's piano and voice are setting the pace.

Kate and Steve Drown (co-producer and recording/mixing wiz) perfected the art of changing the cadence, powering down and pulling out and even varying her vocal effects and effort at different parts of most of the songs – possibly for variety. It's almost a clinic on how songs are produced and put together. And after the cooling off, the emotional rebuilding gives you a tremendous rush and you're feeling the music as much as hearing it. Gliding would be a good word for it.

Lyrically, "Anything...." is also quite good. Tending to the melancholy and "love just out of reach" theme, there is still often hope and optimism:

"Got these plans swimming around in my head. Got these dreams swimming around in my soul. They flaunt me, they fake me, they love me, they forsake me but they don't keep me from the cold. So I opened up my heart and tried to let everything come rushing through. Now I'm stopped here in my tracks all for the beauty of you... ..and to find what you truly need is to know you've had it all along."

Combine those words with those from “Great Love”, and the simplicity and passion pouring from Kate’s inner being will tell the story of her music:

“...Keep it up, keep up the pace...’Cause I’ve got one great love inside and I don’t want to wait...”

Don’t want to wait for her next CD, either!

Arkansas Democratic Gazette March 16th 2001

Singer Makes Her Own Kind of Music

By Jack W. Hill

The Music industry is a known quantity these days, and the aspiring recording artists are not nearly as likely to fall for the old routine rendered up by a fast-talking man with a cigar and a blank contract.

Singer-songwriter-pianist Kate Schrock, for one, knows all she needs to know about how such things work and is making her own way, thanks to the example set by such ‘90’s pioneers as Ani-Difranco.

“I’ve been aware of her since she put her first album out,” Schrock says. “I think she went to Bennington College in Vermont before I did. She instills confidence in a lot of independent artists.”

Schrock will make her return to central Arkansas for a performance Sunday at the Afterthought; she first played here Sept. 8th, but that show was at Juanita’s, and she was traveling with a 4 piece band. This time, she’s bringing only her bassist, Roger Gupton. The chance to play the grand piano at the Afterthought was too good to pass up.

which she released her debut CD, *Refuge*, in 1994 and its follow-up, *Shunyata*, released in 1997. (*Shunyata* is a Hindu word for ‘enlightenment’ and dame’s rocket, according to the dictionary, is “an old-fashioned garden flower of the crucifer family, with white or purple fragrant flowers in spring and early summer.”)

“I started with a simple song, with a simple meaning or message, and as I’ve progressed, I’ve explored more, musically,” she explains. “The emphasis is on my poetry, and as the years have passed, I’ve grown as a musician. Each album has been more of an exploration.”

A native of Maine, Schrock studied philosophy at the University of Chicago before graduating from Bennington. Before the college years, she spent some time as an Elite model in Europe. After graduating, she lived eight months in Los Angeles and was in a band in Chicago.

“The band was called Sin Embargo, and we would put out our own recordings,” Schrock says. “We made cassette tapes, so that was a good way for me to learn how to go the do-it-yourself route. It just grew that way, organically, so by the time I was interested in getting into a real studio, I had been saving up my pennies so I could make my first album.

“The reason I went to Los Angeles was to meet with major labels, so I got to know more about the pros and cons of that approach, and after weighing it, I chose to continue on doing it myself. I had a near miss a couple of years ago, which hammered it home to me to do it my way. I almost did a licensing deal with a label out of New York City that went bankrupt while we were negotiating, so that’s as close to the fire as I want to get.”

She has opened shows for the BoDeans, Taj Mahal, Sonia Dada, Stephen Stills and former Rolling Stone Mick Taylor. Though her recordings are of her original songs, she sometimes enjoys incorporating an

unusual “cover song” in her performances. Lately, she’s been listening to a lot of box sets, including the music of Simon and Garfunkel.

A singer-songwriter and painter, Schrock has heard herself compared with Joni Mitchell, while her voice and piano playing have earned her comparisons with Kate Bush, Tori Amos and Sarah McLachlan. She has yet to exhibit her art, however.

“I’m a binge painter, as well as a binge writer,” she says. “I will go through phases, but haven’t gone that far yet, getting my art in a gallery. I’ve just used it as my CD artwork.”

Home is now a 130-acre farm near a small fishing village on the coast of Maine, where she spends time in her garden and has plans to explore beekeeping. She has worked at building lobster boats, but hastens to add that she has not spent a year at sea on a boat, as has been reported at times.

Schrock figures she had about four piano lessons when she was 9 or 10, before deciding that the best thing she could do would be to teach herself. She cites Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder and Chick Corea as her major piano influences, but adds that she always heard the piano parts of the music of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and knew that is what she wanted to do.

“I promised my mother that I would learn the piano,” Schrock says. “She wanted me to focus on something and I said I would grow up to play the piano.”

Slug Magazine

<http://www.slugmag.com/>

Feb 01

Kate Schrock *Dames Rocke tKakelane*

It is both surprising and refreshing to learn that Maine native Kate Schrock is an independent artist releasing this, her third record on her own label. Surprising because with her rich, expressive voice and strong songs, one would simply assume that she is on a major label. Refreshing then for that very fact. Co-produced with longtime collaborator Steve Drown, Schrock wrote all of the album’s 11 cuts. The quiet and soothing “intro” quickly melts into the catchy “Lose Myself”. What follows is an impressive selection of songs, whose lyrics and arrangements showcase both Kate’s voice and keyboard. Most of the lyrics are about fractured relationships, all of which come to a full boil on the biting “Pig”, where she sings: “He’s a bit of a bastard/but mostly the crowd/biting off what he can’t chew/and talking much too loud.” Powerful stuff. Instantly likeable, one listen to Dames Rocket will make you want to hear more from this talented singer/songwriter.

-Son of Damian

Kate Schrock By Matt Peterson

FACE Magazine April 2001 Volume 14, Issue 4

In this day and age it seems as though the more you triumph in the music business the more you defeat yourself. With financially motivated major labels looking for the next hit single it’s harder than ever for artists to attain freedom within the industry. Nowadays acts are manufactured, processed, spit out and turned over again at here-today-gone-tomorrow speeds. With dollar-sign-corruption choking the life out of radio and music television, it’s inspiring to see the flooring talent of artists such as Maine’s own Kate Schrock sticking to the path of the independent and leaving the crookedness of commerce behind.

“If I was approached tomorrow with a deal from a major label, I wouldn’t take it,” Schrock shared from the South Bristol office of her own Kakelane Music label. “There are so many aspects to the human condition and the human psyche. If we begin to be a society where only this certain portion of being human is looked at, then what are we doing?” There’s darkness in all of us and we have to take a look at that – we can’t not take a look at that.”

Dames Rocket, Schrock’s third album, is an 11-track transit of candle light contentment across the clean piano playing expanse that has come to define her work. On *Dames Rocket*, Kate proves that she is unafraid to confront her emotions, which is why she is able to play through fire unharmed. “I’m a big observer,” Schrock said. “I draw from life. I try to capture something, but it’s art so it is embellished to some extent.”

On *Dames Rocket* through apple-pie-order arrangements she roams the natural high that she has created as if pursued by a demon. She braves all dangers, runs every risk, fears nothing, absolutely nothing, except the loss of her integrity, which she flawlessly maintains on this spellbinding exhibition. The listener becomes disoriented through a sense of Schrock being passed to her fingers, her fingers to the keys, the keys to the notes; the circulation of her playing slides along and propagates a meticulous universe wherein forms arise for a split second, only to be engulfed and then to return, overlapping one another, palpating, penetrating one another as they surge like the waves.

Kate Schrock’s craft is unmatched by any mainstream act that we are fed as consumer’s on a daily basis. Artists like Schrock – artists who lead by example and stir tornadoes on records – are few and far between and that is unfortunate. The sincerity of her music is a life preserver to float on in the ocean of temptation that we wake up to every morning. Grab a hold and don’t let go.

Stereophile April 1998 **Equipment report by Jonathan Scull**

Let me turn to a CD called *Shunyata*, by Kate Schrock (Kakelane CD-0297). Consider is an addendum to my R2D4 (record to die for) recommendations in February: It’s a fantastic recording, if a tad chaffy and digital on top. Just after we’d installed the Wotans, I noted: “Schrock’s voice emanates from the resonating chest and head that’s attached to all the naughty bits. Her acoustic presence is startling, the powerful acoustic bass roils my soul. There’s an amazing sense of clarity, totally pristine yet liquid and musical.”

At the end of “Call The Ghost”, listen to the backing female chorus that rides the tune into the fadeout. Notes: “The vocals are incredibly sexy, velvety smooth, silky, and textured. Schrock is terrifically adept at harnessing classic rock rhythms in an updated and modern fashion. The lyrics are romantic, strong, and intelligent, her voiced steeped in their meaning. It’s the kind of album that makes me reach for the booklet, happy to find the lyrics within.”

Can’t find it? Try Music Direct (800)449-8333

L.A. X...PRESS January 29, 1998

By Joey Alkes

KATE SCHROCK HAS DIED FOR YOUR SINS

Pain and passion, poetry and melody, Kate Schrock leaves no stone unturned in her unabashed confessions of a very human inner clockwork. Schrock's lyricism burns through the listener like a moon lit image of a silent frozen sea of corpses that litter the aftermath of a northern sea tragedy. Having created quite a stir in her adopted haunt of Chicago via Portland, Maine where she originated her perceptions and musical ambition since birth, this candid and youthfully shrewd woman just recently arrived in Los Angeles as part of her world journey (New York, Paris) with both her indie CDs well in hand. Full of independence, spirit and design, Kate Schrock is a vanguard candidate to Shepard the next cycle of renaissance maidens through the thickets of pop music. She does her own art, successfully produces and promotes her own label, and still finds time to do recording projects with the likes of members of the Violent Femmes.

Coming from the DIY (do it yourself) indie world her early press seems to favor the minimalist sound and run on sentences of her debut CD *Refuge* to the more lush, focused *Shunyata*.

If Schrock is to attract a wider more diverse audience, though, it is *Shunyata* that is the direction she will inevitably choose.

Many times indie artists belong ensconced in their niche, which is no crime, and is in fact appropriate to their expression.

In Kate Schrock's case, based on her compelling voice, her multi-talented inclination (cover art on all CD's), her girl next-door good looks and charm, and her ability as a project musician, her gifts deserve wider exposure. What makes Schrock most thoroughly fascinating is that her long torturous road to self-understanding and the pavement of minor chordal progression has the effect of an absolution to the listener. Kate Schrock will be appearing at Jed Ojeda's, The Mint Supper Club on Pico. Los Angelinos will have an opportunity to discover this oasis of sincerity as she performs her alternative salvation hymns in the months ahead.

YEAH YEAH YEAH / A Rock and Roll Magazine

Issue #8 1998

Kate Schrock / Shunyata

The Two things that this pop world is rife with beyond good taste, is cookie-cutter grunge/alternative bands and so-called edgy/tough female singer-songwriters. Hell, even Becky (Rebecca Blasband, from the MTV's *Real World 1*) got a deal with Mercury, although hers, at least, isn't as bandwagonesque as say, Tracey Bonham or whoever that new chick with that hit on MTV that goes "I'm your babe/ I'm your bitch" – like some alterna Terri Nunn –is. Still, all the majors are just shoving this crap down the public's throat while all the aesthetic guidelines fall to the wayside. This year's Lilith Tour, despite its positive cause, won't help. So when someone says this girl's good, she's got great songs and she knows how to sing, what is one supposed to conjure up in one's mind? Fuck if I know. This Kate Schrock is really good, and despite what I just said let's quickly say she's 83 steps ahead of the pack because she's got her own identity like, say, Kate Bush, Shawn Colvin or Aimee Mann. Strangely enough this is an indie but it

blows away most of the majors. Both the production and mastering are top notch while the arrangements avoid the one-dimensional, and her lyrics don't suck. It definitely belongs up there with all the Joan Osbornes and the Iris Dements. For now, it seems she has yet to be discovered.

KEYBOARD MAGAZINE November 1997

Discoveries by Titus Levi

At its most elemental, rock has some reference to blues and country forms. In the case of Kate Schrock's music, the references cannot be missed. Her first CD, *Refuge*, with its sparse organ, voice, and piano arrangement, serves up a wide range of rock and gospel. And while her lyrics spring from the sagacious and penetratingly honest tone of writers like Joni Mitchell, the self-expression and particularly female point of view – especially on points of love and the heart – go back to a tradition that begins with Bessie Smith. Much of the CD has the familiar ring of piano, acoustic guitar, and voice developed by the rock minstrels of the last three decades, but she takes it a step farther. Her singing has an offhand, recitative style, which pushes the bounds of the usual hook-driven pop song. But it is the restless intelligence, truthful experience, and cutting wisdom of her words that makes her music ring true to the rock minstrel heritage. The keyboard playing works because it supports and never obscures the words. Her second CD, *Shunyata*, which means a momentary state of enlightenment, includes all these elements, but comes across with a more open, expansive spirit.

cradle: Maine's Music Magazine

Volume 1, issue 20 June 14, 1995

Kate Schrock: Restless

By Stephan Malleto

The moment I heard of Kate Schrock, I liked her. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because she is extremely beautiful? Or maybe it's because she is very intelligent? It could be that it's because she seems happy? Maybe she is just meant to be? These are some of the things that crossed my mind as I conversed with Kate. She convinces. The things she says are well rooted within her; she makes more than sense at times. Whatever it is that she is or does, I like her mostly because music is her passion.

Kate is a native of South Bristol, Maine. At age sixteen she left home. Traveling to places like New York City, Vermont (where she graduated from Bennington College in '91 with a B.A. in Theater Performance) Paris, France, L.A., Chicago, etc... Kate found herself 'restless,' as she describes it. She spent eleven years experiencing "wander lust" that eventually brought her back to her hometown, South Bristol. "My year in hibernation," is how Kate describes her time spent back in her hometown. "I was building boats" (BOATS! Wow! Willowy, auburn haired Kate, tell me more). "I needed a job, and there isn't much work there. It was either clamming (smiles) or fishing. I started out painting houses, then boats, and then I 'moved up' to building them." It was while she was there, in South Bristol, after "taking a break from the colleges and the big cities I needed time to think," that Kate began to fulfill her path, which would eventually bring her to Portland, ME.

Kate started playing music when she was really young, “Banging on the piano,” as she puts it. “I took a few lessons, and I hated it, I picked up things by ear. I am very fond of improvisation. I remember being fascinated by someone sitting down [at the piano] and going anywhere they wanted to, without [sheet] music in front of them.” She speaks of jazz master Chick Corea as an example. I can almost picture a young Kate Schrock. Looking at the piano teacher thinking to her self, “I don’t get it. Why do I have to learn to play piano that way?” Kate continued to “fool around on the piano for years.” I asked her if there was a specific time when she knew she wanted to play music. Her response was, “I guess I always knew. I always wanted to play. I just needed time to get my shit together, growing up and figuring it out.”

Chicago, where Kate lived while attending college was the place where she became serious(er) about playing music professionally. “I was twenty one when I started a band with someone out there. This band based on the South side of Chicago, lasted a couple of years.” Kate clearly implies that a lot of work had been put into this group from Chicago. “We were all committed. But it blew apart; we were young and stupid!” Kate’s talent was not taken for granted in the band as she played keyboards, flute and also sang. She ended up fronting the band eventually. Interestingly, it was the breakup of her Chicago band that would reinforce her commitment to her music. “I think the seed of what’s happening now was planted after that band broke up,” says Kate. “I dropped out of school, lived in limbo. I started playing my piano a lot and writing by myself.”

In limbo? Yes. She then moved to Vermont to finish her degree studying theater. “It’s always been music or theater”, Kate says of her education years, “except at the University of Chicago where I studied Philosophy.” For a second, I thought of what type of coed Kate would have made in college. She indicated that she was not a party animal, and that, apparently, she did a good job studying. After asking her if she ever plans on going back to school, Kate answered, “there is no school now, and there won’t be ~ I hated school! It’s a miracle I made it through college.”

When I asked her exactly what sort of accent I detected in her speech (she doesn’t speak like a “Mainah”) she threw back at me, “It’s really the accent of having no accent. I think it comes from having so much training in the theater. The only time I talk like I’m from Maine is when I’m drunk!” She smiles a bit sheepishly. Then she surprises me with, “I’m really rather shy (shy?), and when I speak, it can come out quite clipped.” Bold and shy, admittedly.

After school, things started to get busy. She moved back to New York City, where she had originally taken off to after high school. There, Kate worked as a theater technician off-Broadway. While in New York, Kate found times and places to perform. “I started playing music sporadically, here and there. A coffee house, the occasional performance for friends and family, nothing too serious.” At that point during our conversation, Kate, once again, made other references to those times when she couldn’t sit still. Living in Brooklyn, Queens, moving about the city.

But why did she come back to Maine? How did it get from New York, and the city noise to the restful boat building days of South Bristol? “It wasn’t in the plans to move back to Maine. I had just come here on vacation...and I stayed...one month, two months, for the summer, and then for the whole winter (laughs).” Maybe Kate was finding within herself, once again, a connection with where she came from. The cost of living in Maine compared to NY was also a factor for moving to S. Bristol. This was around spring of ’92.

While visiting Portland on several occasions, Kate began to chat with some local musicians. “I started to get a feel for the community. It [the Portland scene] seemed more conducive to what to do, instead of banging my head against the concrete.” One day, while listening to WCLZ, Kate heard of this compilation CD, *Bridges*, in the making, that would include cuts from local artists. She sent a demo she had recorded in NY. “Jim Moran, who was a DJ there, really took the tape and ran with it,” Kate explains. “They liked it. I ended up on the *Bridges*, CD (two numbers: “Mission Beach” and “In love With You Tonight” along with artists like Anni Clark and Dan Merrill), which is one of the reasons why I stayed. People started to believe in what I was doing.”

During that time, Kate met a fellow musician by the name of Jo Carpenito. “We started playing together. He accompanied me on guitar. We immediately hit it off. We started playing everywhere and anywhere (summer of ’93). I would also drag him down to the Bitter End in NY. These trips appeased my craving for a big city. And then I dragged him to The Studio (formerly Tundra), laying down a couple tracks here and there.”

As she began recharging her batteries from her corner in S. Bristol, Kate was debating whether to go back to New York, or to stay in S. Bristol. After considering Boston, Kate chose Portland, Maine. “It seemed like a pretty good mid-point.”

That’s when Kate “hit the ground running,” She explains: “I knew then that my objective was to work, to survive and focus. To do whatever I needed to keep it (the music) going, to develop. It became clear that coming here was my path. She made the official move to Portland in the November of ’93...with bronchitis and pneumonia! To her surprise, Kate, while being employed at a health store, unexpectedly “...learned how to cook! Better anyway. It was a great job.”

Kate had been recording an album by then without realizing it. “It was a practical decision. While playing out, I couldn’t keep up with the sales of my tapes, etc. I wanted to have something of good quality to sell at shows when I played. First, I had thought to put out a five song EP, and then I learned that it costs the same to press five, and it does nine or twelve songs. Her album, *Refuge*, was completed in Dec. ’94. This was recorded at The Studio, in Portland, ME. Engineering help provided by John Stuart who, Kate says, “...gave me a lot of directions.” The mastering was done by Thomas Ciufio and Kate too. She describes her album as “Very raw, not over-produced.” The bass parts are all put down by Kate her self. The album was released on Kakelane Music, Kate’s very own label. “This is a self implosion, self distributed thing (laughs).”

Kate also receives help from her manager, John Lomba. “One of his jobs is to help get the product out,” Kate adds. “He also books shows, is developing correspondence and communication with them industry people. John handles a lot. He keeps me sane.” Upon conversing with John, he, without hesitation, points out, “The best thing about working with Kate is her work ethic. She is committed putting in a tremendous amount of work. She has confidence, but with belief.” Kate, with the help of Lomba, can focus more on her craft. “He came in at a time when I was so overloaded; He took up a lot of the slack so I could think.” They make a good team together.

Since the album came out, Kate has been focusing on playing out a lot. Summer festivals, benefit shows, etc. Kate and John know things are going well by the response of the Old Port Festival crowd June 4th.

Keep on keeping it on,” Kate announces when asked for what’s next, smiling. “Health, happiness...I guess that’s what my goals are.” Having studied philosophy, she also threw this

one at me: “Hope implies that you’re not happy with the present.” She went on to state that; “I trust a lot of stuff that’s already in motion. In the community and within myself.” Hard work she feels is necessary. “This is such a strange business [music], I’ve just got to keep an open mind, open ears, open everything while committing myself.”

She insists that her music is “personal introverted”, speaking of her favorite songwriters like Bob Dylan and Bernie Taupin, Kate says, “Elton John, that’s what got me to play piano earlier on.” To describe her songwriting, she says, “It used to be George Winston with lyrics. Now it’s changing, getting weirder. I play hard on the keyboard – a hacker.” She is someone writing music without a musical background, the everlasting mystery of many good songwriters. Her thoughts: “My feeling why I stayed away from learning [how to read music] is, I say [in school] classically trained pianists who couldn’t just sit in front of the piano and be free with it.” Kate knows where she stands, holding on to what she believes in: “I play, I fuck up, I don’t mind. My fingering and technique is probably terrible in the eyes of the musically educated. I’ve even had to learn, less than a year ago, the notes that I’m actually playing.”

I think that’s great. Kate has a lot of talent and the right frame of mind to make it. And she probably will. This is a town, like many, where a lot of folks don’t have faith (for lack of a better word) in what they do. Spending more time talking than doing. Not Kate Schrock; she will surprise you when you see her perform live, and she will contribute to this musical community that will definitely benefit from her talent, her self.

Her music can be heard all across the country. Many radio stations were sent copies of *Refuge*. She mentioned to me that the material is heard on the radio in places such as Ohio, San Diego, Washington State and Minnesota. That’s a pretty good sign. I think that Kate is off to a promising start. When are you going to see her play?